

Myth

(A Modern Fable)

FADE IN:

PRELUDE: EXT. THE BADLANDS, NOON

A rocky piece of desert - A snake slides down an outcrop and settles, practically invisible, among gorse except for its eyes which appear to glow orange; then slowly the lids close over.

A few moments later a small rodent enters center screen. As it does so the snake's eyes close. The animal cannot see the snake and does not sense any danger from the gorse, entering it in order to gain some shade. As it does so the snake attacks its prey, killing it and immediately beginning to ingest it.

The camera zooms slowly in toward the glowing orange eye of the snake, dissolving to become the sun for the opening scene.

OPENING TITLES

DISSOLVE

OPENING DAY:

EXT. THE BADLANDS, SOUTH DAKOTA, LATE AFTERNOON

The camera zooms out from the red sun now seen descending behind a line of hills. In the foreground is the Badlands Loop Road.

A Prairie Dog scuttles over a rise beyond the far lane of the road. It stops before the lane almost as if it were checking traffic to see if it is safe. Simultaneously a large Winnebago appears screen left coming around the hill on the twisty section of road and then disappears off screen.

As the Prairie Dog reaches the nearside lane the vehicle home, entering from screen left, runs over it, killing it.

There are four people inside: A MAN is driving, a WOMAN is seated next to him and a BOY and older GIRL, of teenage, are seated behind them. They are not talking and look at once, both grim and nonchalant. At the teenagers' feet lies a Doberman.

The vehicle plunges into a tunnel formed by a natural arch in the rock. Somewhere a coyote's cry is heard.

On an outcrop of rock with a brilliant scarlet sunset behind it is the Coyote. As the camera zooms slowly in toward the coyote a close-up of a NATIVE INDIAN CHIEF is overlaid. The Indian talks in Sioux without translation. His manner is clipped and appears belligerent. His image fades after he has spoken and at once the coyote lies down.

After a few seconds it looks behind as if aware of a presence, and then gets up and runs away into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BADLANDS, SOUTH DAKOTA, NIGHT

A Parking site off road close to the Wounded Knee memorial site; the sun has set and it is already dark.

The Winnebago enters and parks and the headlights are turned off. After a moment the reflection of a coyote is seen softly padding toward the vehicle.

The interior lights are turned on illuminating the coyote scaring it away

FADE TO BLACK.

DAY 1:

INT. WINNEBAGO, KITCHEN AREA, MORNING.

The Girl and Boy are seated, eating with the dog underneath the table on the floor. The woman is drinking coffee and staring out the window. The Man enters from bedroom groggily.

WOMAN

(Looks at Man and then turns back toward window and pulls up the blind)

Fucking sand

MAN

(half-asleep)

Uh?

WOMAN

Yup, it's definitely fucking
sand

MAN

It's a desert - what were you hoping
for - Times Square?

WOMAN

After last night's irrigation the least
I was hoping for was a green and
fertile valley stretching for miles.

MAN

Oh - Christ you know I can never go a
full night without...

GIRL

...drinking a case of beer before
bedtime? Your liver...

BOY

And his prostrate...

GIRL

...must be pickled

MAN

Easy guys I'm on vacation. Can't I
have fun too?

WOMAN

Fun...it's that what you think. Christ
it's like sleeping under Niagara
Falls.

MAN

(Sarcastically)

Are you missing your beauty sleep,
honey?

WOMAN

Just because it won't do you any good
doesn't mean I have to miss out.

GIRL

Even the dog pisses
quieter than you.

MAN

What should I do? Go out into the
dark, out into the scary desert?

BOY

Nothing out there as scary as you

WOMAN

Oh that's a great idea - so then we
wake up in a lake

MAN

No different at home. Are we all on
edge?

WOMAN

(sarcastic)

Home? That's an anachronism
isn't it?

GIRL

At home (pause) in our *old* home we
didn't notice it. It was just another
noise in the great city symphony.

BOY

It's another world here - creepy, but
boring.

WOMAN

Right - it's too quiet. You get so
used to the city that you don't hear
it breathing anymore. Out here every
little creak or swish is amplified,
especially with somebody draining
their bladder four times a night!

GIRL

Mom, if the old bear keeps you up all
night do you want me to make
breakfast.

BOY
And who's gonna wake you up?

GIRL
You usually - all those pubescent
animal groans. Oh...ooh...oooh...ooooh!

WOMAN
(To daughter)
It's a deal. Tomorrow you fix
breakfast, you
(to son)
...help her and I'll lie in.

BOY
And what about my vacation?

WOMAN
(Sardonically)
Boy, you were born on vacation.

GIRL
(Giggles)
That's right.

Boy and girl begin arguing.

MAN
Out! Out! Both of you; go and tidy
up the desert or something.

(They exit)

MAN
You know they won't.

WOMAN
Won't what?

MAN
Make breakfast.

WOMAN

I know...but it's enough that they offered.

Pause

MAN

You're okay with this aren't you?

WOMAN

With what?

MAN

This trip.

WOMAN

It's for all of us, isn't it? In the long run?

MAN

(looks tenderly toward her)
I hope so.

WOMAN

(sympathetically)
But you're not sure?

MAN

(cheerfully)
Hopeful...

(pause, and then resignedly)

and uncertain

WOMAN

Coming back here may make a difference to our future. But I'm not like you. I don't believe in magic spells that can make everything right. All I see here is just a lot of sand and rock.

MAN

We've got time... I think you'll take to it. We have a new home to go to now.

WOMAN

Another new home (Pause)
I liked our old place.

MAN

And so did I; I liked all of our old places. But it's never worked trying to ride it out. It was time again, that's all.

WOMAN

Jesus, I know, but that was the nicest spot of all, against the ocean. I was so happy there. We had good friends, the school was great. We both had steady jobs.

MAN

But you always knew that eventually we'd have to move.

WOMAN

But not so soon. I could handle one or two moves at the right time... a different scenario, different friends, neighbours - a thing regular people do. But this...shifting again and again, half a dozen towns all over the country; never settling for more than two or three years, dragging them with us...it's depressing.

MAN

It's hard but they've lost friends too.

WOMAN

They're young, and to them it's another big adventure. They're happy to see the world, but they'll be like me sooner or later; soulless, rootless - unable to find a home.

MAN

They're learning to adapt.

WOMAN

Any better than me? Trying everything humanly possible to fit in, only to land back in another hole we've dug for ourselves.

MAN

I know, but there's hope - at least you have that.

WOMAN

(sarcastically)

That's hope? Excuse my ingratitude!
(she pauses and he looks at her sheepishly)

Honey, I realise that there are few beings born to a care free existence, so I don't expect to live with you and be pampered; but there are times when I find it impossible to forgive. Please don't compare your life with ours - we're not the culpable ones.

(another pause - he lowers his eyes - she softens)

I'm sorry I didn't mean to be cruel.

MAN

You're truthful - that's all. And I have to accept that.

WOMAN

I just wish sometimes the world would fit in with us for a change. Don't we belong here too?

She exits. The Man's anger begins to rise in sympathy with his wife. A rasping sound is heard. As he rises to follow his wife a figure is seen in the distance from the window. As the camera returns to the table four large scratches are etched into the wood.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. DESERT, WINNEBAGO, AFTERNOON

The Man is standing around a barbeque with the Woman. The Girl and Boy are playing a game with the dog in the near distance.

MAN

(Flipping burgers with a spatula)
Impressive, isn't it.

WOMAN

No. It's dry, dusty and full of goddamn flies.

MAN

Just like I remember it!

WOMAN

Sure?

MAN

Well, not so crowded.

Pause

WOMAN

What was it like before?

MAN

Lonely

WOMAN

Why so nostalgic then?

MAN

Oh, I don't know, innocence maybe.

WOMAN

So this is what it's all about? When we you ever innocent?

MAN

Here, once. (*Orates*) The sophistication of the modern world eradicates a certain mystery that can only be appreciated with naivety.

WOMAN

If I were you Confucius, I'd stop philosophizing and concentrate on the food. You're burning it.

MAN

(Ignoring her and shaking the spatula as if deep in thought)
You know what if I could 'un-know' the world or at least my part in it maybe I could go back, rectify the mistakes, or at least isolate myself from them; maybe even do some good.

WOMAN

Meaning?

MAN

We could live different lives.

WOMAN

A different future?

MAN

Right.

WOMAN

Do you see me anywhere in this vision of a bright new world?

MAN

Where would...
(Drops burger)
Oh shit!

WOMAN

Christ, I think Colonel Sanders is safe. How do you like your burger, rare, burnt to a crisp and coated with our special blend of sand and dead flies?

MAN

Perhaps Madame Michelin could fetch me a beer?

WOMAN

It's amazing, it really is.

MAN

What?

WOMAN

To old world grizzlies like you a woman's place is in the kitchen, while the man swills beer and watches TV, except of course when there's a barbecue, then we're not qualified to cook, but, ah, we do get to fetch the beer.

Goes toward Winnebago

MAN

Get yourself one too!

Woman gestures with middle finger in response as she is walking away

GIRL

Hey, is it ready yet?

MAN

(Holds up a burning sausage in close-up obscuring body of Girl)
I guess so.

Woman returns with beer as the Boy and Girl draw towards the barbecue.

BOY

One of those for me?

WOMAN

Oh sure and an apple juice for the old Man.

MAN

You're too young for alcohol.

BOY

Look at those burgers; how can you expect me to eat them without alcohol. Besides the nearest hospital is fifty miles away.

GIRL

(Aside)

I wouldn't take the chance if it were 5 minutes away.

MAN

They're cooked then aren't they?

WOMAN

(Taking up a burger and breaking it in two revealing the raw uncooked inside)

Are they?

(Throws it to the dog, who smells it and refuses - all laugh)

BOY

All right, I'll try one.

Grabs a burger and puts it into a bun then smothers it in ketchup.

GIRL

He likes to vary the taste of his ketchup by adding a little food now and then.

BOY

Shut up! This is a small mercy to my stomach.

GIRL

Your stomach wall is lined with ketchup. Anything you eat never gets digested, it slips straight through to your ass.

Boy picks up the ketchup and sprays it at the Girl. Her T-shirt is speckled with red dots.

GIRL
You fucking shit.

MAN
Enough. You,
(Points to Girl)
get changed. You,
(Points to Boy)
put down the weapon and decide what
you're going to do with that.

BOY
(Puts down the ketchup and the
burger)
I've kinda gone off it.

Woman gives the Man a can of beer, takes the spatula from him, and throws him a beer.

WOMAN
Let's stick with tradition, eh; I'll
cook, you get drunk. And you two can
collect firewood for tonight.

Camera pans into the barbeque flame.

EXT. DESERT, EVENING

It is a clear night. They have made a campfire. The Man is drinking, the Woman reading with the aid of a torch. The two teenagers are making a noise in the near distance, playing around with the dog, who barks occasionally.

MAN
What are you reading?

WOMAN
Poetry.

MAN
So the landscape has finally inspired
you. I told you this land is
timeless. Except for the highway it's
hardly..

WOMAN

Sorry to interrupt the travelogue, but it was recommended to me.

MAN

Who by?

WOMAN

Jill.

MAN

Oh (pause) you mean, 'book club' Jill

WOMAN

Yes, the book club I was kicked out of.

MAN

Kicked out? You told me they'd stopped meeting.

WOMAN

It amounted to the same thing, they just changed venues.

MAN

And conveniently forgot to mention it to you.

WOMAN

Ah huh

MAN

Still, it had its uses didn't it? That Sioux woman - I never would have met her.

WOMAN

You! It was me that had to go to her. She was never comfortable giving me that book, in fact I'm sure it was her that stirred up trouble.

MAN

Some people have a natural affinity for these things. You're old enough to know that by now.

(pause)

WOMAN

When are you going to try? - Do you want me to be there?

MAN

Tonight - alone; you go to sleep. I won't drink too much tonight.

WOMAN

I won't be sleeping.

MAN

Well watch them sleep. Anyway what's the poetry for?

WOMAN

Antidote - "Blue remembered hills"

MAN

What?

WOMAN

It's a nostalgic image. Maybe I'm unearthing *my* own innocence, something that maybe I've never really experienced.

MAN

Read one

WOMAN

No good to you is it with your murky history. After all isn't that the purpose for this diversion.

MAN

Vacation - anything else is a bonus. Relax - read your book. I don't need poetry...
(Throws out his arms)
I'm surrounded by it.

WOMAN

Well if it's all the same to you,
I'll stick with this.

(Returns to reading)

A rustling sound is heard, then silence apart from the
crackle from the campfire.

WOMAN

(Looks up from book)

What's that?

MAN

What's what?

WOMAN

I can't hear anything.

MAN

You can't hear what?

WOMAN

Exactly - nothing, I can't hear
anything.

MAN

(flabbergasted)

That book's in English isn't it?

WOMAN

Of course, why?

MAN

Then can we talk in English too?

WOMAN

We are - you're not listening.

MAN

What!!! I give up.

WOMAN

Ssh, where have they gone?

MAN

(understanding)

The kids? - they've just moved out of earshot, that's all.

WOMAN

It's too dark. We don't know what's out there.

MAN

The same things that were out there today - it's just that someone's turned the lights off.

WOMAN

Haven't you heard of nocturnal activity?

She gets up from chair. Behind her the night sky is crystal clear and clustered with stars. She calls to them but is answered by complete silence until suddenly a coyote cries off in the distance.

MAN

(From chair)

Sit down, they're won't be far away.

WOMAN

(Sitting back down)

I suppose not but I'd rather have them here by the firelight.

MAN

Man's greatest invention. Both friend and enemy, it warms and yet it destroys.

WOMAN

Listen Prometheus, unless you'd like an eagle ripping out your desiccated liver for eternity, I suggest you get them back.

MAN

Sit down and stop worrying. Believe me there is nothing out there any scarier than those two.

WOMAN

I'm not worried - but I still don't share your faith.

Shuffling noises are heard beyond the campfire, nearer than before.

MAN

Is that them?

Suddenly between the two chairs a small white face from a spot at ground level springs up in an arc between them, the face growing larger as it nears. It is the Boy trying to surprise them. He is wearing what appears to be a Native American Indian Headdress.

BOY

Wooah! Wooah!

The Man and Woman react nonchalantly.

WOMAN

There you are.

MAN

Where's the Girl?

GIRL

(Coming in out of the darkness with the dog)

Over here.

(To Boy)

I told you it wouldn't work, nothing scares them.

Dog moves toward campfire and lies down.

WOMAN

Never mind that, where'd you get the hat?

BOY

Hat! Have you no respect for the original landowners around here? This is a headdress.

MAN

(Uneasy)

I know exactly what it is. Where did you find it?

GIRL

(Points off into the darkness)

Up in those cliffs this afternoon. He's been saving it especially for tonight to try and scare the shit outta you.

BOY

(Removing headdress)

For what it was worth.

MAN

Where in the cliffs? It can't have been just lying there.

GIRL

We found a cave.

WOMAN

What sort of cave?

BOY

Jesus...a 'hole in the rock' type of cave.

MAN

What else was in this cave?

BOY

Some bones, wall paintings; the usual stuff you see in movies.

MAN

You shouldn't have taken anything.

WOMAN

Oh come on, you're not getting
superstitious are you?

MAN

I thought you were the one who was
trying to avoid trouble.

WOMAN

What trouble has he caused?

MAN

Burial grounds are sacred places to
the Indian people. It should go back.

WOMAN

And if it doesn't are we going to be
murdered in our beds tonight by the
ghosts of Cochise and Crazy Horse.

The Boy pretends to throw a tomahawk and the Girl pretends
to take the blow in her back.

MAN

Cochise and Crazy Horse aren't from
these parts.

GIRL

Hey what do you know about it?

BOY

Yeah; just who are the famous Indians
of the Badlands?

MAN

The Dakotas belong...*belonged* to the
Sioux - you know - Sitting Bull?

BOY

Never heard of him.

GIRL

A true patriot; immersed in the
history of this great country of ours.

BOY

So, history's a dead subject, like religion and shit. It doesn't interest me.

GIRL

Sitting Bull defeated Custer at the Little Big Horn.

Boy shrugs his shoulders

WOMAN

So that's it. We're all going to be scalped tonight.

Boy and Girl begin to dance around the campfire. The Boy proceeds to mime scalping her head.

MAN

There isn't an Indian dead or alive would dare take you on; we should show some respect, that's all I'm saying.

WOMAN

What... is this guilt, from you? Why should you feel guilty? Did you kill him? Anyway he's at peace - whippee, lucky for some.

GIRL

That's right; whoever owned the headdress has been smoking a peace pipe with his forefathers for a long time now.

MAN

I don't care.

(Looks at Woman for support)

He shouldn't have taken it.

WOMAN

(To appease the Man)

Still, he's right. Perhaps it should go back.

BOY

Aw!

(Disappointed and angry)

Well I'm not going back there tonight.

WOMAN

Nobody's going back there tonight.

We'll go tomorrow.

(To Man)

Happy?

The Man looks ruefully at her as she gets up out of her seat.

WOMAN

Christ it is pitch black out there.

I'm not stumbling around getting lost

just for the sake of an old hat!

Besides you have other things to do.

Let's get to bed you two.

She walks toward the Winnebago and the Boy and Girl follow her. The Man remains at the campfire with the dog in the foreground apparently asleep. An ember suddenly erupts into a bright flame.

Neither the Man nor the dog is disturbed.

FADE.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE MEMORIAL SITE, LATE EVENING

Long shot of the Man kneeling in a Christian style in front of the memorial stone. A powerful torch light illuminates the man and the memorial from screen right. The man's hands are at his side yet his manner suggests he is praying or incanting. After a few seconds he leans forward extending his hands and putting his head against the ground.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

All four are sleeping. The moon shines brilliantly outside the window of the Winnebago. An amber ornament sits on a table and the moonshine is refracted down toward the dog and projected onto its sleeping eyelid. A low guttural sound is heard from outside. The dog's eye opens and glows orange through the projection.

EXT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

From some scrub brush approximately twenty feet from the vehicle the head of a coyote peeks through.

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The dog snarls and begins to rise. It lowers itself down to the floor and heads toward the door which is closed.

EXT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT.

The coyote backs its head back inside the scrub

FADE TO BLACK.

DAY 2:**INT. WINNEBAGO, MORNING.**

FADE IN:

The Man is shaving using a shaving mirror which is steaming over. The Man's arm wipes across it revealing his reflection, disjointed because of the smear. He wipes it again and his image is clearer; more normal. He picks up a cut throat razor.

MAN

Honey, I forgot, can you feed the dog.

WOMAN

(From the kitchen area)

Okay!

MAN

I asked them to do it but you know...

The teenagers are still in bed

WOMAN

(Opening can of dog food)

Let them sleep.

MAN

(Now shaving)

I want to get that thing back to where it belongs.

WOMAN

(Emptying can into a large clear hour-glass shaped dog bowl)

We have all day. I don't understand this sudden nervousness with you. It's not going to develop hands, creep up behind you and choke you to death...

MAN

No - I'll leave that to you.

WOMAN

Then why the urgency?

MAN

There's a reservation near - we don't want to cause trouble

WOMAN

What locals? You mean we aren't the only lunatics here?

(On her way out outside with the bowl)

Well if I meet Cochise I'll tell him we'll put it back after lunch - okay?

MAN

(Shouting from bathroom)

I told you before Cochise isn't...oh
never mind!

The Woman goes toward the door of the Winnebago with a huge grin on her face having got a rise out of the Man.

EXT. WINNEBAGO, MORNING

The Woman calls the dog from the door opening of the Winnebago. It does not show. She goes out of the Winnebago and calls again. The sun hits the glass bowl and reflects in the Woman's eyes in a golden orange glow. There is suddenly a rustling noise coming from the scrub over to her right. She, not overly concerned, picks up a large rock, replacing it on the ground, with the bowl. Unseen by her she has disturbed a scorpion which is now trapped in the glass bottom of the bowl, but unseen from above through the dog food.

INT. WINNEBAGO, MORNING

The Man is shaving underneath his throat. Back outside there is another rustle from the scrub. The Woman's expression shows a steely disposition rather than fear. The cut-throat razor is travelling along the Man's face and the morning sun reflects off its surface. The Man is about to take one last stroke with the razor. As he moves it upwards from his Adams apple to below the chin a streak of red blood draws the opposite way down his throat. He does not notice this. He wipes off the remnants of the shaving foam from his chin. There is no blood visible. He puts the razor down on the edge of the sink so that its blade sticks out over the bowl. The steam from the hot water is rising behind it making it look as if the blade were smoking.

EXT. WINNEBAGO, MORNING

The Woman approaches the scrub. There is movement inside again and she stops juggling the rock between her hands, bracing herself in case some thing comes out of the scrub.

There is what appears to a half smile on her lips. The Winnebago is visible behind her and the man is seen coming out. He calls to her.

MAN

What are you doing?

WOMAN

Out here...trying to feed the dog.

MAN

Okay I'll start feeding the humans then.

As he goes back in she turns back toward the gorse. She looks down into the gorse at a shadow but there is no movement. She then wipes one hand across her face and realises that the stone is covered with red dust. She lifts the stone into view, examining it and then lowers her arm to drop the rock. As the rock hits the desert floor a black shape leaps out of the gorse on top of her knocking her down. It is the dog and she plays gleefully with it.

WOMAN

(Unruffled)

There you are boy! Come and get your breakfast.

She walks back toward the Winnebago with the dog following. The dog begins to eat as she walks back into the Winnebago where the Man is visible from the kitchen area.

MAN

What's that?

WOMAN

What?

MAN

Across your eye.

Woman looks in Winnebago rear-view mirror to check the stain across her left upper cheek, eyelid and forehead.

WOMAN

Oh, it's dust off a stone.

MAN

A stone? Are we under attack?

WOMAN

Hardly Custer; I thought there may have been a coyote or something in the scrub, so I picked up a dusty old stone - just in case?

MAN

(Laughs)

Now who's nervous?

WOMAN

(Peeved slightly, at the suggestion)

Not at all; how's breakfast going?

MAN

Fine considering I seem to be lacking a couple of assistants.

WOMAN

I know, I know; but you'll cope won't you?

As the dog finishes its food the scorpion beneath becomes visible. The dog carries on eating. The Scorpion makes attacking movements with his sting. As the dog finishes the food it turns to go but suddenly notices the scorpion and looks curiously into the bowl. The sun is reflecting an orange glow around the bowl.

The dog's eyes appearing to glow orange and it sits down observing the scorpion indifferently.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CLIFFS, NOON

All four group members and dog are climbing up towards the cave location where the boy found the headdress, which he is holding now. There is the intimation of a breath of wind and the faint sound of distant hoof beats, unnoticed by the family. The sky behind the cliffs is blue and

cloudless. They reach a flat ridge just below the cliff top where the cave is situated.

MAN

(Stumbling)

God dammit how much further to this cave?

BOY

It's just up here on the next ridge.

MAN

You are sure because if you've got the wrong cliff I'm not climbing another.

BOY

Does that mean I get to keep it?

MAN

No, it means I'll bury it here in the sand if I have to.

The Woman looks quizzically at the Man as he seems to be developing an obsession in getting rid of the headdress. He sees it and looks toward the ground.

GIRL

It's okay, this is the one, I'm sure of it.

MAN

I hope so.

WOMAN

I don't know why you're complaining. We're only doing this because you insisted.

BOY

Right - what harm are we doing? It doesn't even fit the guy anymore.

WOMAN

This is ridiculous. It's not theft is it? The Indian's been dead for over a hundred years.

GIRL

We could be joining him.

MAN

Not before we put that thing back

They walk on until they reach a wide level ridge that leads off to the left and the other side of the cliff. Ahead of them is another face of the cliff and the path narrows in front of it. There is gorse growing in front of the face. The Boy and Girl lead on towards this spot.

WOMAN

Careful now, this looks dangerous.

GIRL

That's what I told dickshit yesterday.

BOY

I just wanted to catch the view.

GIRL

Yeah, but who was gonna catch me?

BOY

Boy was she scared

GIRL

Not scared - it was stupid. I'm not Supergirl for fuck's sake.

MAN

(Impatiently)

Where's the cave?

BOY

Well that's just it; how we found it, I mean.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON, PREVIOUS DAY

The boy is laughing. He has the Girl clutched around the waist pulling her toward the cliff edge. He is urging her on but she is resisting. All of a sudden he loses his balance, drops her to the floor and falls backward into the gorse.

BOY

Ouch, jeez this stuff is sharp!

GIRL

Serves you right, asshole.

Boy is trying to free his clothes which are snagged on the thorns.

GIRL

Wait, I'll give you a hand.

She goes toward him as he looks back over his shoulder to try and free his shirt that has been snagged from behind.

BOY

(Spotting something)

Wait.

GIRL

What's wrong?

BOY

There's something back here.

GIRL

Well get outta there!

BOY

No, it's...hold on...

Boy manages to turn himself around and raise himself to a crouch. He peers into the interior of the gorse.

INT. CAVE, AFTERNOON, PREVIOUS DAY

The camera pans slowly across the wall of a deep cave that is decorated with Native American drawings. A light appears and grows in intensity obliterating the drawings.

CUT TO:

A view from rear of cave of gorse masking the entrance to the cave itself. A hand is seen carving a way through, letting the outside light in. Then an arm comes through. It winds itself in through the gorse in a snake-like fashion.

BOY

(Emerging through the gorse)

There's a hole behind here, but you wouldn't know it.

(Boy moves into cave)

Hey, you'll never guess what I just stumbled on.

GIRL

(From outside cave)

What is it?

BOY

A cave.

GIRL

Is it safe, I mean there are there any wild animals in there?

BOY

Only me; come on in. It looks like an old Indian burial cave.

GIRL

(Coming through the gorse)

How do you know that?

She enters the cave and walks up to the boy.

BOY

There's a dead giveaway here.

He points to a skeleton lying behind him on the floor of the cave.

DISSOLVE

INT. CAVE, AFTERNOON, PRESENT DAY

The Man, Woman and Boy are in the cave. It appears shallow but the shadows at the rear seem to indicate hidden depths. The dog is lying down on the other side of the gorse with the Girl. The boy is still holding the headdress in his hand. Reluctantly he fits it back onto the skull. A trickle of blood runs down the side of his face unnoticed by him or the family

BOY

(Sarcastically)

Well I admit it looks better on him today than it did yesterday.

MAN

It's his in life and death
- you have to understand that.

Son looks disappointed. The blood has gone.

WOMAN

(Mischievously)

I've never seen you so spooked

MAN

What do you mean?

WOMAN

You know. Evil spirits, vengeance from beyond the grave and all that.

MAN

Are you going to let this drop? We all agreed yesterday it goes back.

BOY

I didn't.

WOMAN

As I recall it was all your idea.

Woman smiles and Man realizes he is being teased.

WOMAN

So I'm having a little fun with you.
It's the least you deserve for
dragging me up here.

MAN

Did I force you? I told you to stay
back at the Winnebago.

WOMAN

I thought I'd hold your hand in case
you got a little scared.
(Pointing at the Indian skeleton)
He may leap up in indignation and
throttle you with his bony hands.

MAN

Can we conclude the hocus pocus crap.
Nothing's going to happen.

WOMAN

Shame

GIRL

Aw c'mon, this isn't Tutankamen; it
isn't gold; it's a bunch of feathers.
Besides History's a subject that's
full of empty graves. The whole of
Europe is walking on top of what used
to be the Roman Empire and before them
the Greeks. Do the Italians walk
around Rome on tiptoe in case they
incur the insane wrath of Caligula?

MAN

That's progress - this is different.

They move to exit the cave, the Boy going first. As they
go through the gorse bush the Woman turns towards the Man.
He is looking at the cave paintings.

WOMAN

Interesting?

MAN

Ah ha.

Intrigued the Woman turns and joins him. The Man points toward a particular section of the wall. It appears to depict a scene where the cavalry are slaughtering the Native Americans. The Man's finger highlights one particular figure. It is dressed in a cavalry suit but appears to have the head of a bear.

EXT. CAVE, AFTERNOON, PRESENT DAY

They three exit the cave and join the Girl. As they turn to descend back down the cliff the dog suddenly gets up and pads toward the gorse. His hackles rise and he begins to snarl and then bark viciously.

MAN

What's going on now for God's sake?
Can't I leave anybody alone for a
minute out here?

WOMAN

What's wrong boy?

GIRL

I dunno. Maybe he can sense something
in there.

MAN

There's nothing in there, not anymore,
believe me.

GIRL

Can we go now?

BOY

Might as well; the only good thing to
come out of this stupid vacation and I
had to give it back to skinny Joe.

INT. CAVE, AFTERNOON, PRESENT DAY

From out of the shadows at the very rear of the cave pads a coyote.

EXT. CLIFFS, LATE AFTERNOON, PRESENT DAY

They turn to go back down the cliff. The sky darkens behind them. A storm is brewing. A wind whips across the cliff top and a sound like a horse galloping is heard. As they descend the figure of the Native American is seen back up on the ridge. Lightning cracks in the sky above his head.

EXT. WINNEBAGO, EARLY EVENING

The hills are alive with lightning and rain is lashing down. The group are seen rushing in from screen right toward the Winnebago, jackets across their heads and with a torch light pointing toward the ground in front of the group. They are being watched.

INT WINNEBAGO, EARLY EVENING

The group enter the kitchen area and start to throw off their wet clothes. The dog shakes his body covering everybody with rainwater. The Woman goes to put on a kettle. The Girl brings a towel to wrap around the dog and throws more on the kitchen table.

BOY

What the hell was that, Cochise's
revenge?

MAN

(Frowning)

If I have...

They each begin to dry themselves off and one by one sit around the table. The Woman is busy making coffee.

GIRL

Red Cloud then?

The Man's eyes react but he does not answer.

GIRL

Well?

MAN

Well what?

GIRL

Red Cloud...he was a Sioux warrior
wasn't he. This would have been his
home.

MAN

Yes, I suppose so.

Girl smiles smugly at the boy

WOMAN

I thought you were the authority
around here?

MAN

Well, who is the authority on a hot
cup of coffee?

WOMAN

It's coming, unless you can boil water
quicker than me.

The Man and the Girl are sitting at the table with the
window behind them.

The Woman puts drinks down for both of them and then moves
back out of shot. As she does so lightning illuminates the
desert beyond the window.

GIRL

Why so taciturn about an old dead
Indian?

MAN

I was thinking of some thing else,
that's all. Maybe we should all think
of something else?

GIRL

Be pragmatic. Say we drop the bomb - say we destroy everything and there's only a small band of survivors; no computers, no electricity, nothing. How do we write history then? We won't. Sure we can start drawing on cave walls but eventually all of it becomes oral, passed on by word of mouth and in the course of time it gets distorted, enhanced, manipulated. Why? To suit those who hold power - those who wish to shape their own vision of a better future.

BOY

Exactly; and what would the next civilization make of the fragments left behind? When they start digging and come across smashed TV sets, video cameras with maybe a few seconds of tape left with someone porking a Hot dog in Times Square; incomplete snapshots of a world that doesn't exist anymore.

We'll end up like all the other defunct cultures, becoming more mythical than factual. (pause) Hey, we may even become Gods.

GIRL

It only takes a little common sense to realize that most of the major cities in the world are built on extinct civilisations. How many condominiums and apartment blocks are merely huge metaphorical gravestones for long dead nations?

Boy who sits down next to the Girl.

BOY

That's right, didn't you see Poltergeist?

GIRL

(Putting the torch underneath her
chin and mimicking the
spiritualist from the film)

Don't go into the light.

Another crack of lightning illuminates outside the window,
but this time the figure of the Indian is seen outside
looking at the Winnebago but at a distance.

WOMAN

I think someone's beginning to get a
little jumpy.

She walks behind him and grabs him by his sides as if to
startle him.

MAN

So that's how you interpret my concern
for my family?

WOMAN

(Puts arms around him)
Can't you stand a little teasing?

MAN

(Goes to reciprocate)
Only from you.

As he does the boy and girl also run in to cuddle him in a
playful but deliberate intent in preventing them embracing.

BOY/GIRL

(In a deliberate childish
fashion)
Oh thank you Daddy waddy.

More lightning illuminates outside but this time the figure
is gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT.

The Man and Woman have just changed for bed. The Man is in
bed dozing and the Woman about to climb in. There is a
noise outside the door. It disturbs the Man.

MAN

Is that them just going to bed?

WOMAN

Relax, go back to sleep. They're young. They don't need to hibernate as long as you do.

MAN

Have they locked up?

WOMAN

The Girl will do it, don't worry. Sleep.

MAN

(He pulls back the covers for her)

Nothing else?

WOMAN

(Ignores him)

Haven't you anything to tell me?

MAN

(pause)

Last night?

(Woman looks at him impatiently)

No nothing.

WOMAN

I told you - all that faith in a stupid book about a dead civilisation; written to cash in on the inclination of gullible morons like you.

MAN

Hardly dead!

WOMAN

Well, hardly significant then.

(pause)

MAN

You're as disappointed as me, I know.

WOMAN

No, I'm angry.

MAN

Angry at me for trying or angry because there never was any magic in the first place?

WOMAN

The truth? The truth is I'm pissed for both reasons. But I'm also pissed because I never wanted this and I'm pissed because I want to go home for good and I'll never do that. Christ is there no forgiveness anywhere?

MAN

It's my sin.

WOMAN

Small consolation when it casts its shadow on us all.

(pause)

When you first suggested this trip I empathised with you because I felt that something in our lives might just change for the better; don't get me wrong - I wasn't relying on that mystic crap, it just seemed that maybe this time it would be okay. We'd tried to live good lives. No cover ups - we gave to local charities and were involved in the community. Jesus, we even went to Church. What did we hear there? Forgiveness, tolerance for even the most heinous of crimes; well where's yours - where's ours?

(Turns over and goes to sleep. Man pauses looking over her in sympathy, kisses her head and does similar)

In the kitchen area the open Winnebago door moves gently back and forth in a soft breeze.

EXT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

There is movement within the scrub and after a few seconds the head of a coyote appears. It waits there, seemingly tentative, even unwilling, to leave the scrub. Finally it moves into the open followed by two more on either side. They slowly move toward the Winnebago.

CUT TO:

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The dog stirs and begins to sniff the air. It begins to stand up and then snarls sensing the intruder's presence.

CUT TO:

EXT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The coyotes stop and then take a backward step.

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The dog moves across the kitchen area and out through the door

CUT TO:

EXT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The coyotes are now in turn beginning to snarl, as they sense the confrontation with the dog.

CUT TO:

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The Winnebago door swings intimating that the dog has got out. The moon is shining brightly in the sky illuminating the landscape underneath. From beyond a rider is approaching in slow motion. As he closes in it becomes clear that he is an INDIAN WARRIOR charging out of the night, his arm is raised and holding a tomahawk. A high pitched howl pierces the silence.

CUT TO:

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT.

The Man immediately awakes from his dream and rises in an arc from a prone position to hear a cacophony of snarling and barking emanating from beyond the Winnebago. Suddenly an excruciating yelp of pain pierces the night.

The Man rises pulling on his dressing gown. Behind him his wife rouses herself.

WOMAN

(Groggily)

What the hell's the racket?

MAN

It's the dog. Sounds like a fight.

WOMAN

How the hell did he get out?

MAN

Who was supposed to lock the door?

WOMAN

Oh...

MAN

Exactly and she was going to make breakfast?

The Man enters the kitchen area, in a dressing gown, and begins to search for torch. He finds it and turns it on pointing it at the seat where the dog was sitting.

There is a noise behind him he wheels round and finds the Boy's face in the torchlight. The Boy, in pyjamas, looks at the Man and then at the seat. The dog fight is continuing outside.

BOY

The dog?

MAN

Uh huh.

CUT TO:

EXT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT

The Man and Boy exit through the open kitchen door. As they do all becomes silent.

They are quickly followed out by the Woman and Girl, also in dressing gowns.

WOMAN

Any sign?

MAN

No sign, no sound.

GIRL

What's happening?

MAN

I think the dog's been in a fight.

GIRL

With what?

MAN

(Contemptuously)

Well it's a big country around here;
pick a fucking animal.

The Girl looks down toward the ground aware the Man's anger is directly aimed at her.

BOY

(Sympathetically)

Probably a coyote.

WOMAN

Okay, look, we'd better start
searching for him.

BOY

I'll get the other torch. We'll -
 (Points at the Girl)
 look over there.

MAN

No you won't.
 (To Woman)
 Take them back inside I'll scout
 around.

GIRL

(Goes to protest out of her
 guilty feelings)
 But...

WOMAN

No, do as you're asked; one voice is
 as good as four in this wilderness.
 If the dog is out there he'll come
 when he's called.

Reluctantly the Boy and Girl return to the Winnebago with
 the Woman.

The Man moves off with the torch searching further afield.
 His torch light filters through the scrub as he calls out
 for the dog.

MAN

Here boy, come on, where are you?

He stops beside the scrub. The torch beam is pointing at
 the ground. His face shows concern as the torch picks out
 a severed limb on the ground.

The Man stoops down to examine the limb more closely. All
 of a sudden a howl pierces the air. The Man looks up from
 his crouching position.

MAN

I should never have brought them here.
 I should have stayed away. What the
 hell have I started?

He begins to walk back to the Winnebago. He stops on the
 step up into the home holding the door in his right hand

and motions to close the door then reopens it looking out at the landscape as if recalling the dream he had moments ago.

INT. WINNEBAGO, NIGHT.

Man puts his head in through the door. The Boy and the Girl are awake in their beds.

GIRL

Well.

MAN

No, no sign of him yet.

BOY

Great, fucking great. I lose a souvenir and my dog in one day in this shit hole.

MAN

Calm down, the dog will be back.

BOY

I don't share your confidence.

The boy turns on his back. The Girl motions to the Man to go, intimating she will talk to him and calm him. The Man exits.

The Man climbs back into bed. The light is on and the Woman is awake.

WOMAN

That went well. You know you really are cursed.

MAN

We can go in the morning, can't we? That's what you've wanted.

WOMAN

We can't go now.

MAN

You're kidding me. You've hated every minute here and now you want to stay?

WOMAN

Not for my sake, for theirs.

(Pointing toward the Boy and Girl)

I still want to leave; hey I didn't want to come here in the first place, but not now; it'll only make things worse between you and him if we go without the dog.

MAN

And if he doesn't show?

WOMAN

Then we take it from there - the same as we've been doing all along.

FADE TO BLACK

DAY 3:

INT. WINNEBAGO, MORNING.

A black hole that turns into the Woman's closed right eye with a heavily dosed with black mascara. She opens this eye and begins to apply mascara to her other eye. She is holding a compact mirror while she sits on the bed. Man enters.

WOMAN

Where are they?

MAN

Looking for the dog.

WOMAN

Good.

MAN

Good?

WOMAN

It'll be a cathartic exercise for them.

MAN

Meaning?

WOMAN

If we lose the dog it won't be without trying.

MAN

It's their pet.

WOMAN

You found him. You'll find another.

MAN

I don't think so. Did you talk to the boy this morning?

WOMAN

Yep.

MAN

And?

WOMAN

He's upset. What do you expect?

MAN

I'm beginning to regret this now.

WOMAN

Isn't a bit late in the day for a reality check

MAN

It was stupid coming out here again misplacing hope on some invisible...

WOMAN

Again, what do you mean again? You mean this isn't the first time?

MAN
(aware of his blunder)
No - not the first.

WOMAN
How many?

MAN
Forget it it's not important.

WOMAN
How many?!!

MAN
Six, maybe seven times.

WOMAN
I can't believe it. Did you think I would have come here if I knew you'd failed half a dozen times before?

MAN
Oh come on now, that's not fair. I have to try, even you can see that.

WOMAN
Oh it is fair sugar, it's as fair as I'm ever likely to get. You could've come here yourself. You didn't need us.

MAN
And what about...?

A shout suddenly pierces the air outside.

MAN
What the hell?

The Girl bursts into the Winnebago.

GIRL
He's gone! He's gone!

The Man and Woman run to the window to look out.

WOMAN

Where's the boy?

MAN

I don't know.

They leave room and head toward the Winnebago door.

GIRL

He's gone.

The Man and the Woman are now both standing next to her by the door way of the Winnebago.

WOMAN

What do you means he's gone?
The Boy? Where's he gone?

GIRL

He found some remains. We were
looking for the dog and...well he just
went crazy.

MAN

Where did he find them?

Girl points.

MAN

I told you two that I searched there
last night and to look somewhere else.

GIRL

I did, or at least he told me to. He
wanted to check you hadn't missed
anything.

WOMAN

So you found something last night?
Why didn't you hide it?

MAN

I did, at least I thought I had, but I
was stupid enough to believe that some
people would do as they're told.

WOMAN

Okay, that doesn't matter. Let's just go get him. Where's he gone?

GIRL

That's the problem.

MAN

Where...oh Christ no...not the cave?

GIRL

Uh huh. He went back for the headdress.

WOMAN

But why, what has that got to do with a missing dog?

GIRL

Pay back.

MAN

Pay back?

GIRL

He loses something so he takes something to replace it.

MAN

Now do you see what all this talk has done? He's convinced there's some archaic conspiracy going on here. We should have left this morning.

WOMAN

Well why did you have to put the thing back in the first place, it harmed no one?

MAN

Here we go again. Will someone stop blaming me for everything?

Looks at the Woman who gives him a look in return as if to say it is his fault in fact.

MAN

Okay, okay so it *is* my fault, but
let's not argue, let's just go and get
him.

WOMAN

Leave him. Let him bring it back as a
souvenir. He'll be happy and we can
go today.

MAN

No. He has to leave it alone. We can
get him before he gets there.

WOMAN

Christ, not again? I just hope we
don't walk under any ladders on the
way up.

INT. CAVE, NOON

The boy is in the cave and picks up the headdress again.
As he turns to exit he notices something painted on the
wall.

BOY

Well, well, you told us you'd been
here before but you never said when.
That does explain a few things,
perhaps even your stupid concern over
a pile of feathers. But I'm sorry Old
Man

(Then turning toward the
skeleton)

And you too Cochise, this is mine now.

(Goes through gorse bush)

EXT. CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The boy exits the gorse and walks to the edge of the cliff.

He looks across the panorama of the Badlands. He
triumphantly places the headdress on his head.

BOY

Whoop! Whoop! I am Little Running
Bear. These are my lands now.

EXT. BELOW CLIFFS, AFTERNOON

The group are ascending the cliff-top. They stop and look up towards the cliff tops as the sound of the Boy's voice carries across to them. The father is prominent in the middle with the women in single file behind him.

WOMAN

That's him.

GIRL

What the hell's he shouting for. With
a mouth like that he could start a
landslide.

MAN

Let's move before he buries us down
here!

They recommence their climb.

EXT. CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The Boy continues to hoot and mimic the stereotypical image of the Native American Indian. We see a piece of flora on the ridge close by. The plant begins to twitch as if a small breeze had just blown through it. Some of the feathers on the headdress appear to flutter in the breeze. Then on the ridge floor sand begins to lift into the air. The breeze is getting stronger. The Boy stops dancing and looks up and around at the sky and surroundings.

BOY

(Grinning inanely)

Oh dear, have I upset somebody?

The wind whips up even more dust around the Boy who begins to dance again.

EXT. RIDGE BELOW CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The group arrive at a flat area about sixty feet below the Boy. They cannot see the Boy now for the dust storm but they can hear him.

WOMAN

What the hell is that?

MAN

Sandstorm.

GIRL

What, just up there?

EXT. CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The Boy continues to dance in the middle of the storm. Behind him in the murkiness four figures become visible. He dances for a few moments and then notices their presence. The Boy strains to make out who they are. Suddenly a violent gust of wind blows off the headdress.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGE BELOW CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The headdress falls out of the dust cloud hitting the ground some ten feet from the group.

MAN

Oh shit! I don't like this

CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The Boy is struggling to stand. The four figures appear to come toward him. The storm begins to intensify coupled with the noise of a horse's hooves, growing louder and louder. As they seem to thunder past they drag with them a fierce blast in their wake which rips the boy from the cliff.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGE BELOW CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

The group have moved toward where the headdress fell, the Man is holding it in his hands.

GIRL

He must be in trouble.

MAN

It appears so...

WOMAN

Look out!

A figure falls toward them from out of the dust cloud. They jump out of the way as the Boy's body slams into the ground.

EXT. CLIFF TOP, AFTERNOON

Back at the cliff top the sandstorm abates and the sound of the hooves fades into the distance. As the scene clears the four figures become visible. They are four Native American Indians. One is an elderly man, the GRANDFATHER, one middle-aged, the FATHER and two are teenagers, an ELDER INDIAN BOY aged about 17 and a YOUNG INDIAN BOY about age 14. They are from the Pine Ridge reservation located to the south of the Badlands. They approach the place where the boy fell.

They gaze down at the group below. The Woman has the boy's head cradled in her arms while the Girl is holding his hand. The Man is still holding the headdress but begins to squeeze it with his hands in close-up. He looks up at the cliff top and as he does so the four Indians come into view.

The group as one seem to respond together in looking up toward the Indians. The Woman begins to rise, laying the Boy's head gently down and assuming a position behind the Man's right shoulder; the Girl also moves from the Boy's body toward the Man's left shoulder. Together they form a triangular shape.

They assume stern, vengeful faces.

The younger boy stands slightly apart from his family group as if the family below had annexed him with their formation. The four Native Americans withdraw slowly from the cliff edge.

INDIAN FATHER

The crazy idiot; I think he must be dead.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Father - what happened?

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Yeah, that freak storm...I've never seen one like that.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Freak? I don't think so.

INDIAN FATHER

(Angry)

Don't go there father, not now, not today. We shouldn't even be here.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I left my reasons with your cousin. I didn't ask you to follow me.

INDIAN FATHER

What else could I do? A dream, a stupid dream warns you you're needed here because of some old legend. And now we're mixed up in this!

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

You would not understand and yet you should.

INDIAN FATHER

I understand one thing. We could all be in big trouble here.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

But we're innocent we didn't touch him.

INDIAN FATHER
Try telling his family.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
If they saw it with their own eyes
they would still blame us.

INDIAN FATHER
(Thinking of the boys)
No they won't. I'll tell them the
truth that he slipped.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY
It didn't look like he slipped.

INDIAN FATHER
(Irate)
So did we push him then?

ELDER INDIAN BOY
That freak wind took him over the
edge. We all saw it.

INDIAN FATHER
(To Indian Grandfather)
This is down to you isn't? I thought
I said the stories were to stop?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
And deny them their heritage?

INDIAN FATHER
Because of this: children blaming the
cause of a tragic accident on a
supernatural wind.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
(Turning to the boys)
Your father is right, it was not the wind.

INDIAN FATHER
At last, a sensible voice in the
wilderness.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
It was something inside the wind.

INDIAN FATHER

(Groaning)

Father, don't you realise how serious this situation is? Don't you think the police would love to have four crazy Indians using an old Indian legend as an alibi in a murder case?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

So you...

INDIAN FATHER

Yes I remember...but that was in another life.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Son, your faith may be dead but it is not your place to kill theirs.

INDIAN FATHER

This isn't the time to argue about your misplaced loyalties. Those ideals have longed ceased to have any significance to us. What is significant is that there's a boy lying injured, maybe dead down there.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Continuing to ignore him)

Do you believe the Gods have let us down?

INDIAN FATHER

Why do you persist with this lunacy?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Boy? You know what I think.

FATHER

Not this again. That was the craziest excuse I ever heard you give for running off. It's just a myth, told to you by your father and told to him by his father and so on. It never happened.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Then why did the Boy desecrate the burial site, why does he have no respect for our faith?

INDIAN FATHER

Faith! What is faith? What are legends? They're falsehoods ingraining in us another myth, designed to sustain the belief that we are a superior race and forgets what we see every day.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Your eyes do not look any more. One day - soon - this land will be returned to us. The rivers will burst with fish and the hills and plains will roar with the hooves of buffalo. We will hunt again and we will sing songs to our Gods. I will not see it and, perhaps, neither will these two boys but their ancestors will as long as we are alive in their hearts and souls.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

I believe you Grandfather.

INDIAN FATHER

You do not know what you are saying. The old Indians are dead and there are no new ones. We are in limbo between the old world and death - that is all. The only thing you are going to do is go home with your Grandfather and brother!

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

There will be a new world and a new tribe. It is the masters' nature to destroy the goodness the land offers. He takes and never gives and when he has nothing left to destroy he will destroy himself. Then we will take back what was ours.

INDIAN FATHER

(Kindly)

Father please take them now, no more talk...

(Looks at the boys)

I should go now and talk to them.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

(Frightened)

Don't go Father.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

(Apprehensive)

Yes Father. Let's go home. There's something not right here.

INDIAN FATHER

We can't just leave. That's madness. They would assume we'd killed him. I would rather talk to the police than be hunted by them. They will not take our side before them. The boy stole the headdress don't forget, they may think we are extracting some ridiculous form of revenge for the desecration, like in some old movie or your Grandfather's stories.

The father looks pleadingly with his eyes toward the Grandfather begging him to do as he says. A look passes between them acknowledging that a silent agreement has been reached.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Grandfather, stop him. I don't trust them.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Your Father is right, someone must speak to them. Go then son and I will take the boys and start for home.

(Looks at his son)

God be with you.

INDIAN FATHER

I'll be okay - you worry like the young ones.

He smiles reassuringly and goes.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Grandfather - you are afraid too?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Yes.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Is it the family or something else?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Yes.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BADLANDS, AFTERNOON

The grandfather is hurrying away with the two boys toward Pine Ridge reservation.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Grandfather.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Hurrying on not wanting to stop,
knowing the child is about to
quiz him)

Please, no questions eh, we need to
move quickly if we wish to get home
tonight.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

No Grandfather, this is far enough, we
must wait for my father.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

My brother is right. We should wait
and make sure he's okay.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Your father okay; what is going to
happen to him? Someone had to go to

them. We don't want a visit from the police.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

The police will come anyway, we are witnesses.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Yes, but not murderers.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

What could we tell them?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

What your father told you. It was an accident.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Why were you arguing with father then?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Stops and pauses before he speaks)

My skin is wrinkled and perhaps my mind is a little that way too. It is a Grandfather's duty to entertain his young ones with stories, but now you need to leave the child behind.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

What about the stone?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

The stone?

ELDER INDIAN BOY

What are you talking about?

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Sometimes my Father would see us talking and he suspected that Grandfather was telling me about the old legends.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And he would send you on an errand to get you away from me.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

And if you hadn't finished the story you would write the end down for me and hide it under a special stone, so I could find it and read it later. We had a sign to let me know when it was there.

(He demonstrates by locking the two biggest fingers of his right hand together and curling the rest into his palm, holding it to his chest)

ELDER INDIAN BOY

But Grandfather we never had to do that.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Your father didn't always hate hearing my stories. It was only later, fighting for the rights of our people, that he changed.

Pause.

But these were stories; that's why your father was so angry with me for taking them too seriously.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

You are lying to us Grandfather...I know it; you have great faith. You wouldn't say such things if you didn't believe in them.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

If you respect the Gods you must respect me also. You cannot be commended for one and be guilty of the other. I was angry when I saw the boy mocking my people and I wanted to believe that the Gods punished him for the outrage.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

I'm sorry, but I cannot forget what I saw and heard, or what you told me before about the wind horse.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

That's right Grandfather. I remember that story, and we all heard the horse's hooves.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

So when the police come to the reservation for your statement, you will tell them that we are innocent because the wind horse galloped in sending the boy tumbling down the cliff face, and they will believe you and go away?

Grandfather looks secretly toward the eldest son urging him to back him up and calm his brother down.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

(After a pause)

You're right Grandfather, but that is why we should have gone with my father, to convince the family that we are blameless.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Hostility toward us is inherent with our masters. If your father can't persuade them on his own, your presence won't help him.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

But if they see we are boys just like the one that fell, surely they would know we would not have harmed him?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

My son, it matters little how many summers your face has seen, you will never be trusted by them. We need to get on.

The Grandfather turns and begins to walk on again; the two boys reluctantly follow behind, the youngest bringing up the rear.

EXT. BADLANDS, TRAIL TOWARD PINE RIDGE

The family are walking in file approaching a rocky section of the Badlands. The Grandfather leads with the eldest boy and then youngest in succession. After the Grandfather and the eldest boy have negotiated some narrow turns around the rocks, the Grandfather looks back.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Where is your brother?

The eldest boy looks behind him.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Plodding, I expect.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Get him, tell him to hurry up.

Eldest boy walks back along the trail. The Grandfather carries on but is stopped by a shout from the eldest boy, who is running back down the trail.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Grandfather! Grandfather!

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Whispers in trepidation)

Don't tell me, oh no!

ELDER INDIAN BOY

I can't find him; he must have run back.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

You must get him; he cannot have gotten too far.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

He's a good runner. Let him come back with my father if that's what he wants.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

No, no! You must get him now. Go quickly.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

But...

Eldest boy turns to go and as he does the grandfather grabs his arm.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Keep a watch; watch for anything unusual.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Unusual?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Go, Now!

The eldest Boy runs off.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. RIDGE BELOW CLIFF TOP, LATE AFTERNOON

The youngest Boy approaches the spot where the Boy fell. Creeping ever closer he climbs into long grass. He can see his Father talking to family, but the Man, Woman and Girl do not reply.

Their manner is silent but increasingly belligerent as if there has been a well of anger lying dormant in each of them about to burst upwards. As he creeps closer, he can see both the Woman and the Girl appear to be leaving the side of the Man and circling around his Father.

The Young Indian Boy suppresses his desire to help his Father as he is suddenly paralysed with fear, as if he feels a malevolent force in the atmosphere. As the women continue to circle his Father he can see the body of the dead Boy a few feet further away.

Kneeling in the tall grass, the air around him seems to be diffusing into an orange glow, illuminating the specks of sand and grass that are floating in the air.

Across the ridge the Man's eyes are glowing orange and suddenly he and his family transform into bears and attack the boy's father caught in the reflection of the tears in the Native American Boy's eyes.

He is frozen with fear, watching his father being butchered. All of a sudden a streak of blood lands across his nose and left eye. Automatically he exhales a slight wince.

The family all swing round immediately on hearing the boy, their faces human again. The Father is lying, bloodied, on the floor behind them. The boy struggles to stop shaking with fear. The Man motions to the women to walk either side of the grass where the boy is. He himself begins to approach from the front.

The Man approaches the grass. He stops right in front of where the boy is hiding. Then in a swift movement he parts the grass, but the boy has gone. The women search in the side of the clump without joy. The Man bends down and retrieves a moccasin from the spot where the boy was hiding.

As they rejoin each other they look back down the trail leading up to the cliff. There is a puff of sand on a little rise some thirty feet away.

MAN

Run away Goldilocks, run as fast as
you can; no porridge for you today.
The three bears are coming to play.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. TRAIL TO PINE RIDGE, AFTERNOON

The Indian Grandfather is on his knees and appears to be praying.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

My son, what have I done to us all?
They have killed you; I feel it in my
heart. I let you go to save the young
ones and now look what I have allowed
to happen. Why did you follow me here

with the boys? It was my duty to face him - alone. I knew he had returned just as he has come before. But he is not alone this time. Now I fear that none of us will make it home.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CLIFFS, LATE AFTERNOON

The eldest boy is running toward the ascent to the cliff top. Behind him a low a low rumble reverberates from the valley beyond. He looks but cannot see anything. After a moment he carries on climbing until he reaches the top.

EXT. DESERT, RIDGE BELOW CLIFF TOP, LATE AFTERNOON

The eldest Native American boy arrives back and finds both the bodies of the Boy and his Father. He begins to sob and walks toward his father's body, kneeling down beside it. It is covered in blood where the skin has been ripped by the claws of the family.

In his anguish he notices the deep claw marks on his father and becomes overwrought with anguish, horror and incomprehension of what has gone on here. He caresses his father's head and gently lays it down.

The sun is beginning its march downhill toward sunset but it is still fairly light. He wants to call out for his brother but is gripped by need not to draw attention to himself.

Somewhere in the distance he hears the same low roar again. All of a sudden he feels an urgency to get away from there. He removes his jacket and covers the face of his father, promising to come back for his body, and swiftly runs back down the trail.

EXT. BADLANDS, ANOTHER TRAIL, LATE AFTERNOON

The young Native American boy is running frantically toward the sunset, occasionally peering back over his shoulder to see what's behind him. That low growl is heard once more. He audibly lets a little cry out and turns to run.

As he looks again there is a disturbance and what looks like a cloud of dust behind him. The boy's escape is reflected in the reflection in a dark eye.

CUT TO:

EXT. BADLANDS, GORGE, LATE AFTERNOON

The boy is standing on the edge of a narrow gorge about 50 feet deep and seven/eight feet wide at its narrowest point and slightly lower. The boy begins to panic hearing another roar and realising his pursuers are getting closer and that he's trapped. He looks across and sees a narrower section and moves toward it. The distance is around five feet and he begins to rock back on his arches as if gauging the distance to jump.

The boy slowly walks backward about ten steps to give himself a run up. There is disbelief in his face that he can make the jump and he looks back for another way.

Suddenly there is a huge growl very near and instantaneously he runs and jumps from the edge.

He lands awkwardly on the opposite ridge on his right knee, bouncing backward in the process. In desperation he tries to grip the edge with a hand but is unable to and falls into a clump of trees growing under the gorge.

INT. TREE, LATE AFTERNOON

The boy's body is wedged within the branches. He groans in pain and begins to try to move but cannot. The whole tree is reverberating with the impact giving his location away.

Above him the roar is almost upon him

The boy tries in vain to try to stop the branches shaking by grabbing them.

Above him the sky is darkening and we hear again the muted sound of horse hooves. A wind whips up and blows through the gorge like a river running through it disturbing everything within the gorge, whilst uncannily the air is still above on the ridge.

The boy can see the shapes of his pursuers through the waving branches of the tree. After a moment they turn and go. His pants are torn and bloody at the knee. The boy is relieved but then a thought comes to him..

YOUNG INDIAN BOY
(Whispers)
Grandfather.

EXT. BADLANDS, DESERT, NIGHT

The Grandfather and the Eldest Boy have made a fireless camp and are huddled together for warmth. The Eldest Boy is still in shock from finding his Father's body.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
You saw what no son should ever see
and my heart weeps with yours. Your
father, my son, was a great man, and a
fine warrior. He had no weapon except
that given to him by the white man,
the justice system, to fight them
with; a weapon sharp at only one end.
A man must have a great deal of
strength for it takes many blows to
draw blood with a blunt tool.

ELDER INDIAN BOY
But his arms are lifeless now.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
They will continue to hold you up.

ELDER INDIAN BOY
And my brother.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
(Lowering his eyes)
Perhaps, but I fear he may be taken
too.

ELDER INDIAN BOY
But I told you Grandfather, he wasn't
there.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

But they will hunt him down.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

The family! No Grandfather, there was no sign of them. Whatever attacked my father must have scared them away.

Pause

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

It is a long time since we sat around a fire and you listened to my stories.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

I am not a child anymore.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Yes, you are a man now, and we will have to make do without the fire, but let the child in you listen anyway.

Pause

Once there was a white man who came to this land. Every day he would go out to the woods to hunt bear - all kinds of bear, and kill them. One day he went out to the woods and found one by a fish creek and crept up on it with his rifle. But this was a medicine bear and he could read the hunter's thoughts.

As the hunter cocked the gun the bear turned around and spoke to him. "Do not shoot me. Why be my enemy? Come to my house and let us live together"

The hunter went with the bear to his cave and lived with him. The bear provided him with food and shelter and showed him the ways of the mountains; how to fish and how to hunt rabbit and wild dogs.

When the bear had taught the hunter everything he knew, the man had no

need of the bear's friendship. But he knew he could not kill the bear while he was awake because the bear could read his thoughts, so one night when the bear was sleeping in the cave the white man crept over to the bear and slit his throat.

The bear woke with a start, scaring the hunter who crawled into the corner of the cave afraid that the bear was only wounded and would come and kill him. But the bear looked at the hunter and spoke softly even as his life blood seeped through the slash in his throat.

DISSOLVE

INT. CAVE, PAST

The time is of a mythical past. A MAN is seen crouching in the corner of the cave. He is dressed in the clothes of a frontier man. He has a beard and is unkempt. It is the face of the white Man from the Winnebago. The Grandfather continues the story in voice over.

"You have killed me, hunter, though I gave you my friendship and taught you everything I knew. But listen to me now. If I had wished I could have killed you at any time. You are a great hunter but you are no match for me.

"A year ago I had a dream that a hunter would come and kill me. I had that dream again tonight but I did not wake and stop you because it is my destiny to die tonight. But you are cursed white hunter. I will live on in you but only in rage and deceit. The best will die with me but you are bequeathed the worst.

"When you wake tomorrow the worst in me will rise with the worst in you. You will yearn to go back to the world of men and for a while they will welcome you, but little by little they will begin to feel uncomfortable around you until they shun you completely. Then you will have no choice but to return to this cave and these woods.

"You will not starve because you have my hunting knowledge, but because you do not possess the best qualities of the bear you will assume the appearance of one when you rage, only becoming a white hunter again when the anger leaves you. And thus you will live forever as a Bear man". With this the bear lay down to die.

DISSOLVE

EXT. BADLANDS, NIGHT.

Back to a close-up of the Grandfather who continues his story.

GRANDFATHER

When the hunter woke the next morning he forgot all that the bear had said and went out to hunt and he stayed in the cave throughout the winter.

DISSOLVE

EXT. WOODS, DAY

We see the Bear man leaving a cave in a wood. The Grandfather continues in voice over.

But when spring came he yearned for the company of men again and left the cave in the woods.

EXT. FRONTIER TOWN (MONTAGE)

The hunter arrives in a township. He gets a job at a general store, and we see him serving people and laughing and joking with them, but soon the customers drop off and people rush by the store. Finally we see him walking out of the store having lost his job. He is seen leaving the town.

GRANDFATHER (Voiceover to accompany the montage):

"But he could not settle back in the world of the white men because he could not control the rage within his body and the people who knew him felt this rage and began to desert him"

EXT. WOODS

The hunter is seen heading back to the cave.

GRANDFATHER:

"Then he remembered what the bear had told him and returned to the cave in the woods to live as a man bear but as the bear had cursed him he cursed the land and its people. He vowed to destroy all around him because he could find no joy himself he would obliterate joy for all, forever"

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAIN

The Man is dressed in a Cavalry uniform and riding a horse as part of a large troop of cavalry in full charge. They are attacking a group of Native American Indians and as they catch them they begin to slaughter them indiscriminately. The white horse looms into sight and we see the Man now transformed as a bear, roaring.

GRANDFATHER:

The man bear moved unseen like a ghost in the world of white men, spreading hate, greed and fear of the Indian; because the man bear recognized that

in order to survive he must side with the winner. He was with the cavalry at Sand Creek and Wounded Knee and helped win the war for the white man.

I knew the bear man was here because I could sense his presence in this land as I felt it before, but I did not expect more than one and that is the thing that frightens me most. I do not know how the man bear found a way to breed.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

But why did you let my father go to them?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I believe that your father knew it too.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

My father didn't believe in the old legends and gods.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

He went to them to give us time to get away. That is why I fear for your brother.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Then we must go back and save him, if they are as you say.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

The boy was foolish to run away and I was careless. I will not risk your life even if I lose my own.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

How can you leave him at the mercy of these creatures?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

My son, the history of your people has been one of slaughter and sacrifice.

We make do because we have survived
 against enemies bent on our
 eradication. What little we have been
 given will suffice until our lands are
 returned to us; even if only one
 Indian is left it will be enough to
 reclaim our birthright.

Pause

Your brother's smart. If they do
 catch him I hope they'll be exhausted
 and too tired to come after us
 tonight. But they will come tomorrow.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Then we will die anyway.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

You will survive. When they come I
 will fight them and gain the glory
 that runs in my blood. You will
 escape to Pine Ridge.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

I won't leave you to them.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

You must. Someone has to warn the
 people that the bear man has returned.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

No-one will believe me. You're the
 only one I know that really had faith
 in the old myths and legends. Who'll
 take my word that there actually is a
 race of bear men out there? Beings
 they think belong in stories handed
 down from generation to generation;
 stories that they believe were made up
 to teach us things or to frighten
 children into behaving?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I do not know. The world is a hard
 place for faith. When people have
 everything they have no need of it but

when they have nothing they blame the gods they deserted when they were rich. The masters deny them too because to acknowledge them would be to interfere in the collection of worldly things.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

Then there is no hope.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

No, not if the spirit lives.

ELDER INDIAN BOY

But how can we kill what couldn't be killed before? Why didn't the spirits kill him when he came before?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I have seen him twice. The last time he stayed only two days. I saw him at Wounded Knee and I thought he had been praying. But he never desecrated our land like he has done this time, and he must be killed before he desecrates it again.

Pause.

The boy trembles and is unconvinced.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Get some sleep. I will pray for our safety tonight. Put your faith in the gods my son. They will protect us

The boy smiles weakly and lies down to sleep. The Grandfather waits until the Eldest boy falls asleep and then takes out a pencil and a piece of paper. He moves away a few feet and begins to scribble a message on it.

Out of the darkness a lit campfire appears.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE, THE INDIAN CAMP, NIGHT, THE YEAR IS 1890, WINTER.

The campfire is inside the Indian camp at Wounded Knee. The flakes of the fire intermingle with falling snow crystals. The people are suffering; they are tired, hungry and cold. Some however are dancing around. They are performing the Wovoka, the ghost dance, which was supposed to bring about the fall of the white man and the return of the land to the Indians.

On the far hillside above, the fire of the soldier's camp is visible. On the snowy ground between the two camps a snake slithers across; its eyes having an orange glow on them. As it disappears into the woods to the right of the Indian camp the roar of a bear is heard.

CUT TO:

INT. TEEPEE, NIGHT

An Indian family, FATHER, MOTHER and BABY are asleep inside. The shadow of a bear is cast on the fabric. The bear appears to be walking around outside.

(No sound in this section except the bear roar)

The sleeping mother begins to stir awake. She turns to look at the baby. A shaft of sunlight has illuminated the baby's body. She begins to stir the child by gently rubbing its chest. Suddenly she feels something wet. She opens the baby's shirt and finds a bleeding bullet wound.

She recoils and tries to wake her husband but he is gone. As she stands up she becomes aware that the shaft of sunlight is very narrow and is coming directly through the side of the tepee. She walks toward it to investigate. She puts her finger into the hole, recognizing immediately that this is a bullet hole from which the bullet that killed the baby travelled.

Then suddenly another shaft of sunlight bursts through the tepee at the level of her stomach and outward from her back to the back of the teepee. She puts out her hand caressing the ray of light and following its path toward her stomach.

She pulls away bloody fingers and exits the tepee.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE, MORNING

The bloody wound is visible through her shirt. As she walks outside she looks up at the flakes of snow cascading down from the wintry sky. She puts out his fingers to catch a snowflake which turns into a bullet as it rests on the palm of her hand. She looks down at her feet and the ground is covered with bullets.

She looks back up and sees a small CHILD coming toward her. The child's head is down as he paces toward her so that she can only see the top of his head. He stops in front of her. She gently lifts his head from below the chin. As the child's face comes into view deep claw marks are visible running from his cheeks, across his eyes and disappearing into the hair line.

A bear growl booms from the woods and the Indian mother turns to look at the source. She sees her Husband coming from the forest after hunting. He is carrying a rifle. As she turns back the child is gone.

The father steps out onto the field of the massacre of Wounded Knee. The soldiers are all gone but the frozen bodies of the slaughtered Indians are still there.

He finds his wife's body outside the tepee which has been almost completely obliterated by gunfire. He leans his rifle against what is left of the tepee and walks into it. After a moment he re-emerges with the baby's body.

As he walks around the camp with the baby in his arms, he comes across the body of an Indian Chief who had led what was left of his tribe to Wounded Knee, frozen and twisted on the ground.

There is a roar from the forest and as the father looks toward it the child has vanished from his arms. He goes back to the teepee for his rifle intent on hunting the animal that made the growl. He goes off toward the forest.

EXT. WOODS, MORNING

The wind begins to lift through the branches of the bare trees in the woods and horse's hooves are heard. The Indian looks around for the Wind Horse and sees a white charger coming through the forest and starts toward it. As he enters the forest he loses sight of it, and begins to search frantically.

Suddenly he espies part of a horse's body lying behind a thick tree. As he clears the tree he sees a figure leaning over the horse. It appears to be eating the horse. It hears him approach and turns around to face him. The figure is the bear man, his face bloody with the meat of the horse.

EXT. BADLANDS, A CAMPFIRE, NIGHT

The Grandfather awakens from his dream. He can feel warmth and as he opens his eyes he is staring into a campfire. He is, for a second, completely disoriented after the dream and staring at a fire he did not build, and then his eyes open wide in horror as he sees the Bear man sitting in front of him on the other side of the fire. They eye each other for a minute.

MAN

You know who I am?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Pause)

Yes. Where is the boy?

MAN

Gone.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Lets out a deep and anguished
sigh)

Haven't you killed enough of my
people?

MAN

You killed my boy.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Anger rising)

He killed himself. He desecrated the grave and stole what he should have left alone. But the rights of the Indian people have never bothered you before.

MAN

(Matching his anger, then controlling it)

I made him replace it. And I would have made him replace it again. He was angry that's all.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Taken aback by the Man's vehemence)

Your kind is always angry.

MAN

You never gave him a chance; you pushed him over the cliff.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

He wasn't pushed by any of us.

MAN

You took revenge because of the headdress.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

It wasn't our vengeance.

MAN

Then who's? Your gods; they're a bit late aren't they? Then again, they always were, that's if they showed at all.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Only for those who have lost their faith.

MAN

Alright I'll humour you. How did the boy die?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
They sent the wind horse.

MAN
(Stifles a laugh)
The wind horse? Even I haven't heard
that one.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
The wind horse took him over the edge.

The Man roars with laughter mocking the seriousness of the
Grandfather.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
You are old bear man, older than I;
surely you don't doubt me?

MAN
Like your son you mean?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
My son had faith. As a little boy he
would beg me to tell him about the
heroes of the past.

MAN
That doesn't sound like the man I
killed.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
It is the world of the white man that
robs us of work and respect that
renders him useless; that's why he
questioned his faith, but he never
really lost it.

MAN
I'd like to reassure you but I'm
afraid to me he's just another dead
Indian.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER
No, another brave Indian like so many
in the past, sacrificing themselves
for others.

MAN

So he sacrificed himself, for what?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Are you so old and so unwise? My son
sacrificed his life for ours.

MAN

He knew what we were?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

He was suspicious of you and so he
entrusted the safety of his sons to me
(Pause)
...and I have failed him.

MAN

Your nation has a history of failure;
don't feel too bad about it.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I believed that as long as there was
one Indian who kept his faith, one day
our nation would rise again to reclaim
this country as free men. Perhaps my
son was right and now the bear man has
returned to wipe out those who are
left.

MAN

You're wrong old man. I don't need to
wipe out your people. You're finished.
You've been finished for a long time
now. I am only thinking of our
survival.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Then you haven't come for conquest?

MAN

Just survival. You know the curse. I
can live with the white man for only
so long and then it begins.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

They find you out.

MAN

No, nothing so banal; friends that you make become uneasy with you. They begin to make excuses - stay away - isolate you.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Then you return to the cave.

MAN

(Laughs)

Cave! How archaic you are. I haven't been to that cave in a long time. No we simply move state. Uproot and start again.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

It's the same thing. (With distaste)
Where did you find your mate?

Long pause.

MAN

My wife, old man, is my daughter.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(In revulsion)

Your daughter! And the children?

MAN

My son and daughter too.

(Pause)

Why are you surprised? Men and animals it's all the same; we still have the same primeval urge. In a rage I mated with a bear but the cub was human or should I say a bear child like me, a daughter. I never aged, so when she was old enough I took her for a wife. I must breed daughters to keep my own family. That way I never have to be alone.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

But the children?

MAN

They understand; they are like me after all, all except the fact that they will age and I will not.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And the males?

MAN

They are catered for, in house, so to speak; and the numbers are always kept to a minimum, for discretion. We're a very close family.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And you watch them grow old, and die.

MAN

It's difficult to watch a son become a brother and then finally an aging parent. It's equally difficult to watch a daughter become a wife and finally a wrinkled old mother. Can you imagine the kind of emotional turmoil I go through?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

You cursed yourself bear man through your own greed.

MAN

Listen to me. I have had to learn to adapt and to survive - just like you. When I was a young man I came to this land, fascinated by it. But I was corrupted and wanted more - and was...am, still cursed for it.

And when the Indian wars began I took the side of the white man because I knew he would win.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

But why did you urge the white man to continue to slaughter us when you knew we were beaten?

MAN

Believe me they didn't need any encouragement.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Nevertheless you...

MAN

Acceptance.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And that is justification for the murder of innocent women and children?

MAN

You have a wife old man?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

She has been gone for twenty years.

MAN

You never took another?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I did not want to.

MAN

What do you miss about her the most?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

The warmth and presence of her body lying next to me at night.

MAN

The comfort in just knowing that there is somebody there?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Yes.

MAN

Imagine not twenty, old man, but fifty... fifty years without that simplest of pleasures. You may understand loneliness but you cannot comprehend how painful it is to be

completely alienated; unable to be trusted or loved; to make friends only to see them desert you because there is something in you that begins to repulse them; something they can never quite put their finger on. Then the anger rises.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And you become the bear again.

MAN

I learnt to control it so no-one ever saw my other self.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

But some have?

MAN

Not many, but yes, some.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And you have killed them?

MAN

I don't want to kill. I want to be free.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Is that why you have come here before?

MAN

You know?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I have seen you before at Wounded Knee, one night many years ago.

MAN

I came to pray. And I came back this time for the same reason. Not to kill, or desecrate but to seek the means by which I can die, like everybody else - and you old man.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

And were your prayers answered?

MAN

It appears not and so I have to go on
searching for...

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

...mercy...atonement for your crimes?

MAN

Why not, why should I be denied that
promise?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

You are not human. You sacrificed
those rights.

MAN

Maybe so but I'm hardly rich am I?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Richer than I

MAN

But not spiritually I guess, which is
why there's nobody listening; not so
different from your son them am I?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

My son did not harm anyone faith or no
faith. You kill and continue to kill.

MAN

Only to survive; that is why it is
important we keep a small family unit.
One day the curse will be lifted but
until that day no-one can know about
us, that is why we cannot let you go.
Now where is the boy?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

But...you took him.

MAN

No...the youngest boy.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

(Joyfully)

Then the boy lives...I thought you had killed him with his father.

MAN

He escaped but we'll find him.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

I was wrong. I doubted the gods but they have protected the boy. I have my faith back again bear man. I was scared because I knew I was going to die here and I feared the darkness. But the Gods have spoken to me by protecting the boy and I will see them today.

MAN

(Looking up over the Grandfather's head)

No sign?

WOMAN

(Her voice comes from the darkness beyond the rear of the Grandfather)

Now?

MAN

(Beginning to rise)

Your convictions are admirable, old man, but believe me we will find him.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Bear man, I believe the curse will one day leave you because you have an innate thirst to destroy and, in turn, your savagery will destroy you. But my Grandson and his sons will live on.

The Grandfather smiles and closes his eyes aware of the closing presence of the mother behind him.

The Man, now standing, nods an assent to the woman and turns around. There is a flash of something gleaming behind him in the dark. It is a bear claw. The Grandfather

smiles and then suddenly lets out a deep groan as the Woman's claws stab into his back.

FADE TO BLACK.

DAY 4:

EXT. TREE, MORNING

The boy wakes from his sleep. He is still in the branches of the tree he fell into. He tries to move but winces and then recalls that his knee was hurt jumping from the ridge above him. Painfully he begins to disentangle himself from the branches and climb downwards toward the ground. He lands awkwardly remembering his shoeless foot which is also bloody and badly bruised.

Once descended, he appears uncertain as to which direction he should go. He looks back and then decides to go on towards home. He is limping badly but the bloody knee has congealed.

As he walks he begins to have flashbacks of his father's murder and his inability and fear in trying to help him. He stops. His face is full of tears. He slumps down to the floor crying profusely. He recalls in flashback sitting down as a child while his Grandfather told him all about the great warriors of the past. He suddenly feels ashamed.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Father, I let you down when I should
have died at your side. I was scared.
I sat with my Grandfather for years as
he told me of the great warriors,
listening to every word and learning
nothing. I will find my Grandfather
and my brother, and fight with them
against these creatures and, if I have
to, I shall die with them.

He turns and begins walking back toward where he ran away from his Grandfather.

EXT. BADLANDS, LATE MORNING

The boy spots a jackrabbit

DISSOLVE:

EXT. AN AREA CLOSE TO AN INDIAN VILLAGE, MORNING, A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE PRESENT ACTION

A rifle barrel pokes out of a clump of bushes. It is pointing toward a jackrabbit. A sudden breeze blows in disturbing the rabbit. It runs off. The rifle barrel withdraws and then the boy and his Grandfather stand up from behind the bush. They are out hunting.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Never mind Grandfather, we'll get him again.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

No my son we must not kill him now.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Why?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Because the Wind Horse has saved him.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

The Wind Horse?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Have I never told you of the Wind Horse?

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

No.

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

Sit down and listen then.

They sit down and the Grandfather begins to talk:

'At the time when day and night were still deciding who comes first, there

lived a horse that was called Wind Horse, and was the fastest and gentlest of all the Indian ponies.

Wind Horse felt no fear for there was no-one who could harm him and if there were an Indian wounded or lost that needed a ride, Wind Horse was there to help him and carry him away.

One day, as Wind Horse was feeling the good feeling from being free, he heard a cry for help. He ran to the edge of the forest and saw an Indian boy with his foot caught in a bear trap. The boy's foot was cut off and he could not move.

Wind Horse went to the side of the boy and as the boy leaned to him he bent to let the boy on his back.

The boy who had no name, had lived alone all his life for no-one wanted him. As he rode the wind on the horse he could feel the good feeling that Wind Horse felt, but Wind Horse knew that the boy's wound could never be healed and took him to the place of the Indian Burial Grounds.

As they approached the grounds the boy could see they were shrouded in mist. As he set down the boy recognized where he was and asked the horse if he was to die. Wind Horse told him that his body would pass away but his spirit would never die and that he would never be alone again.

Suddenly there was a strange sound, a music he had never heard before but seemed familiar and then out of the mist came several figures. Although he did not recognize them he knew they were the great warriors and tribesmen

of the old days and had come to take him with them.

He turned to face Wind Horse to thank him for saving him and the horse bowed and then leapt galloping into the sky taking the mist with him and when it cleared there was no-one left standing in the Burial Grounds'

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

But why does Wind Horse protect rabbits?

INDIAN GRANDFATHER

He doesn't protect all the rabbits and all the prairie dogs and all the coyotes, only the special ones.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Is that why there aren't so many Indians now?

DISSOLVE

EXT. BADLANDS, CAMPFIRE, AFTERNOON

The boy comes across the camp that his Grandfather had slept the previous night. The fire is out. As he searches around he lets out a huge gasp as he discovers the bodies of his brother and Grandfather. They have been mutilated with huge claw tears across their bodies. He breaks down and sobs.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

I have failed my father and now I am too late to right the wrong.

He picks up his Grandfather's head and cradles it in his arms.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

I should not have left you. I ran away because I thought I was man enough to assist my father and I discovered I was still a frightened child. Now, when I want to act like a

man, I am as helpless as a child again.

If the bear-man wants me I will not run away this time and I will not fight. I deserve to be clawed as you are, but not for bravery, for cowardice.

CUT TO:

EXT. BADLANDS, AFTERNOON

The boy has covered his brother's body with stones and is about to begin covering his Grandfather when he notices the two big fingers on his Grandfather's right hand. They are fixed together with the rest of the fingers and the thumb curled into the palm.

He looks around and notices one particular large stone sitting out of place on a small rocky ledge. He goes over and lifts it. There is a note written underneath; the note his Grandfather was writing the night before.

It reads:

'My son, if you find this note we are victims of the bear-man. I feel in my heart that you are alive, but you must carry out the final wish of your Grandfather. Pine Ridge is too far for you to make it alone, they will catch you. You must go to the sacred burial ground where you will be safe.

You must perform the ghost dance, the Wovoka, that I showed you two summers ago. You must summon up the ancient warriors; they are needed to combat the bear-man.

I was wrong to lie to you on the road about the stories, but I only wanted to get you and your brother away safely. I hope you can forgive me and

that I haven't weakened your belief. You must keep your faith. It is the only thing that has the power to eradicate fear.'

The boy pockets the note and continues to cover his Grandfather's body with the stones. He arranges them thus that his grandfather's face is still visible before the last stone is lain over it. He kisses it and then places the last rock over his face. As he stands there, there is a roar in the distance. The boy turns toward the direction of the roar.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Bear-man, I am ready for you and your family. I will lead you to a place where the Indian still has power and you will be destroyed forever.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BADLANDS, LAHOTA SIOUX SACRED BURIAL GROUND, LATE AFTERNOON

The boy enters the sacred burial ground. The sun is already beginning to race toward twilight. He looks around at the site. He is determined to see his task through but he is trembling. He gathers wood and prepares to make a fire. The air is still and he lights the fire. After a few moments he kneels and closes his eyes murmuring prayers in preparation for the Wovoka.

The sun has almost set. The boy comes out of his trance and begins the dance. He has been performing it for some time as the area outside the campfire grows darker. He stops dancing, waiting for something to happen. Nothing does.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Grandfather! What I am doing wrong? I have danced exactly the way I have been shown and no-one comes, no-one answers.

He sinks to his knees.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Perhaps you didn't lie Grandfather; perhaps they are only stories after all. The gods are non-existent and there are no ancient warriors lying in wait to reclaim a glorious past. They are the past.

They are only history, a remedy to cure us, to enable us to accept the today's humiliations for the false promise of a rosy future. They are as powerless now as they were against the white man. I am alone and...

He stops speaking as he sees a pair of feet come into view. He looks up. It is the bear-man.

MAN

Well little man, you escaped us yesterday and we have spent the whole day searching the trail to Pine Ridge, only to find you here. Are you as stupid as your Grandfather thinking you will be safe in this place of superstitious nonsense, I wonder?

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

(Showing a brave face but quaking with fear)

You have no power here bear-man.

MAN

You believe that too. Listen my friend, I am an old creature and I have seen many things that the normal world would pass as magic, but I don't see any gods or warriors. Are they coming?

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

They will come.

MAN

So sure, but why? Why tonight of all nights? Where were they at Sand

Creek; at Wounded Knee? Where have they been for the last 100 years; waiting for tonight's special events; waiting for one solitary little Indian boy dancing the Wovoka? Are you the Messiah? Are you the chosen one who will raise the warriors from the dead, wipe out the millions of people living in this country? Is it you who will repopulate the plains with Buffalo and wild deer?

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

The Indian needn't waste his weapons; you and the white man have enough of your own to defeat yourselves.

MAN

We certainly had enough to win two wars. What would have happened to the free world if this land had not been taken, had not become powerful enough to resist the fascists; or perhaps these were stories your Grandfather forgot to tell you?

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

The thief always has a good excuse to steal.

MAN

It's a lot easier to steal when the victim is so careless. But let's say the bomb drops and all over the world millions perish; civilisation grinds to a halt, but the Indian is untouched. He clambers out of the wreckage the master of all he surveys. And what will you gain little man; a sky that is eternal night; plants irradiated and dying; water that is undrinkable? How will that bring back the great Sioux nation? Like it or not, they will either rule or no-one will.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

That is why you side with him.

MAN

Who should I have sided with, the Indian? I could see that the Indian could never win. I had to try to blend in. I didn't believe it would be so difficult. But better to live as I do with them than starve on a reservation.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

You are worse than them.

MAN

Not worse, simply a contemporary. I have learned not to compete with him and so I survive. True we have to move on every few years or so but one day the curse will end. Your nation chose to fight an un-winnable war; losers do not get a share of the spoils.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

The war is not lost.

MAN

Predictable to the end and
(Pause)
...this is the end.

The Woman and the Girl enter and arrange themselves at either shoulder of the Man, their familiar triangular position.

MAN

You cannot be allowed to reach Pine Ridge. I am sure that any story you told of bear men would take some believing but I am not prepared to risk it.

He motions with his head and the Girl moves from behind readying herself for an attack. The boy begins to wheel

away in a defensive mode when a breeze suddenly blows through the burial ground and then a thick mist begins to descend behind the boy so that while one half of the area is misted, the other, where the group are standing, is clear. A strange music is heard coming from within the mist. The boy is torn between wanting to turn around to see what is happening but is too afraid to take his eyes off the Girl.

Suddenly she utters a roar and her face begins to assume the appearance of a bear, she leaps out at the boy. A swishing sound comes from the mist and then an arrow follows it meeting the body of the Girl half way. It knocks her back, but as she steadies herself for another charge, a succession of swishes are heard and a dozen more arrows fly from the mist thudding into her body and propelling her into the fire where she lies, burning.

The Woman immediately responds again transforming at the same time and just misses grabbing the boy who manages to elude her the first time but is then cornered and taken by the elbow. She lifts her arm to strike and a huge claw is visible where the hand should have been. She is about to bring it down across the boy's face when a shape coming from the mist distracts her. As she looks up a spear smashes into her right eye knocking her backwards and pinning her head to a tree behind.

The boy is let go of and recoils in horror at the manner of the Woman's death. Suddenly he is aware that the Man has vanished and begins to creep around the burial ground. He shuffles about on all fours taking refuge behind a rock and curling up into a ball. He is staring directly into the mist and can see several figures approaching through the murkiness. They appear to be the warriors of the Indian wars. His heart lifts as he sees that one of them is walking directly toward him although still within the mist.

The figure is holding a tomahawk and throws it in the boy's direction. The tomahawk appears to glow as if some unseen light source was reflecting off it. Then everything goes black as a huge paw claws deep into the boy's face. The bear man has risen from behind him. As he tears the skin the bear man looks up and sees the tomahawk slicing through the air toward his neck. It severs his head and lands on a flat faced rock behind creating sparks as it lands. The weapon appears to be smoking as the friction burns curl

into the air above it. The bear man's grasp is loosed on the boy's face as his head and body separate and hit the floor.

The boy is bleeding profusely but not seriously and as he passes out the figures are beginning to recede into the mist, a light breeze is blowing and the sound of horse's hooves are heard in the distance.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. THE POWDER RIVER VALLEY, A SUNNY DAY, THE FUTURE

The young boy drifts into sleep. In his dream he is standing in a thick mist in the burial grounds when a white horse trots in. He climbs aboard and the horse leaps out through the mist. The boy falls asleep on the back of the horse. It is a starry night and the flowing mane of the horse indicates that they are travelling at some speed. After a while the horse slows as if to land and the boy awakes. He opens his eyes and begins to stare in wonderment.

Before him and the horse is a vast and beautiful valley. There are herds of buffalo roaming across the plain and Native Indians can be seen riding alongside them. There is an Indian camp in the distance by a silver river. He dismounts and walks to the edge of the hill. The boy smiles in joy, and then turns his head back toward the horse but the horse is gone. The boy is sad for a moment and lowers his eyes to the ground. After a moment he lifts up his head and the smile returns, but it is a smile of knowing that one has returned home after years of being away. He walks down and into the valley.

DISSOLVE

CLOSING DAY:

EXT. SACRED BURIAL GROUND, MORNING

The boy awakens. He winces and begins to search out and feel the wounds on his face, the bruises on his arm and his knee. He struggles but manages to get up on his two feet.

He looks around him and is astonished. There are no signs whatsoever of the battle of the previous evening. The bodies of the group and all the weapons are gone. There seems to be no indication that anything at all happened; no blood only the last remnants of the fire he built.

A sudden thought comes to him and he limps across to a tree on the edge of the burial ground. He looks it up and down and suddenly his eyes rest on one particular spot. He reaches out with his fingertips and begins to feel the bark. There is a deep gouge at the spot where the Woman was impaled through the eye.

He walks over to the area where the mist had sprung up and from where the warriors had appeared. There is no evidence of their appearance; no footsteps, no spent weaponry. He is about to turn away when he espies something caught in a crack between two rocks. He reaches down and extracts a small feather from an Indian headdress. He puts it to his nose to smell and smiles, pocketing the feather.

He kneels to make one last silent prayer of thanks and then stands up and exits the burial grounds.

EXT. BADLANDS, RIDGE BELOW THE CLIFF TOP, AROUND NOON.

The boy is seen, holding his brother's jacket, standing above a corpse covered in stones. It is the boy's father and he has returned to protect his father's body from marauding animals as he did for the other members of his family until he can reach Pine Ridge and have the bodies taken home.

YOUNG INDIAN BOY

Father, I have healed the wound of my disgrace I carry and can now face you in the next life. I have seen things here that I cannot explain and even if our people were to see the marks on our bodies, I do not think they would believe me.

So I will keep my own story for my children and theirs, as well as those that Grandfather told me. I will tell them too, that I have seen a vision of

the future, where everything will be restored and our people can have hope once more.

The sky begins to darken and the boy looks up at it. He turns to go.

EXT. BADLANDS LOOP ROAD, AFTERNOON

The boy appears from beyond the far edge of the road, still limping. He stops as he reaches the side of the road.

The sky is dark behind him as if a storm is brewing. He looks up at it whilst at the same time a white Winnebago turns the bend in the road, screen left and disappears off again screen left.

The boy begins to cross the road. As he reaches the lane nearest the camera the Winnebago enters screen left hitting him head-on. The image freezes. The boy's body is twisted in towards the bonnet with his left arm flailing out high above his head. His right hand has gripped the edge of the bonnet. The boy's face is frozen with terror as he gazes toward the cab of the Winnebago where he sees the bear man and all his family. Their faces are grim but nonchalant as if they either didn't care or were unaware of what was happening.

Something dies in his eyes. Perhaps it is hope or maybe his faith but it is more than just life about to exit from his body. The action restarts and the boy disappears underneath the car.

It lies twisted in the road with his one bare foot clearly visible

The Winnebago drives into an arch of rock or tunnel of trees. As it enters a howl is heard in the distance.

EXT. BADLANDS, SUNDOWN

On an outcrop of rock high above a coyote is sitting. The same close-up shot of the Native Indian chief is overlaid as we approach the animal. He utters the same speech as before but this time an English translation is given at the bottom of the screen.

'They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one: they promised to take our land, and they took it.'

It is the famous speech of RED CLOUD of the Oglala Sioux. The image fades and as the camera continues to zoom in, it becomes apparent that the animal is not a coyote but the 'missing' Doberman.

The camera continues in toward the dog until about a medium long-shot when it pauses. The dog lies down, leaning its head on its paws. The dog lifts its head, as if it is suddenly aware of our presence, but looks on without any concern.

The camera pulls away as if in fear.

FADE OUT:

TITLES